

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant's undersigned attorney would like to thank the Examiner for granting the telephone interview, which was conducted on October 2, 2009. During the interview, Applicant's representative explained the differences between the claimed scratching means and the rollers (78 and 79) of Wang. As discussed, Wang's roller are arranged to wring out and press the carpet belt 28, thereby squeezing out the cleaning liquid (see col. 5, lines 56-62). By contrast the claimed scratching means (41) is a fixed structure that scratches or rubs against the endless conveyor belt, which functions to remove particles in addition to liquid. The rollers of Wang are structurally different, and thus do not provide the claimed function. This is explained in more detail below with reference to the claim rejections.

Claims 1-4, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wang (U.S. Patent No. 5,933,900), hereinafter "Wang".

Regarding claim 1, Applicant claims "a scratching means (41)" for removing liquid and particles from the belt. Wang only discloses wringer rollers 78, 79 for wringing a wet belt. The "scratching means" of claim 1 is a so-called means-plus-function limitation in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph. Accordingly, when rendering a patentability determination this claim language must be interpreted to encompass the structure disclosed in the specification corresponding to such language, along with equivalents thereof. See MPEP 2181. Wang does not disclose any structure equivalent to the scratching plate (41) as shown and described in the specification. Thus, Wang fails to anticipate the scratching means as defined by the written description and as claimed in claim 1.

Thus, Wang fails to teach every limitation of claim 1 as required to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and the

respective dependent claims 2-4, 8 and 9 are not anticipated by the cited reference and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 5-6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over Wang in view of Lynn (U.S. Patent No. 5,203,047), hereinafter "Lynn". For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed. The asserted combination of Wang in view of Lynn, independently or in combination, does not teach or suggest all features of the claimed invention.

Claims 5, 6 and 10 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1. As explained above with regard to claim 1, Wang fails to disclose a scratching means for removing particles within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph. Additionally, this deficiency of Wang is not taught or suggested in the disclosure of Lynn. Therefore, even if Wang were combined with Lynn, every limitation of claim 1 would not be taught, suggested, or otherwise rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination.

Accordingly, as claims 5, 6 and 10 depend from claim 1, and as claim 1 is not rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination, claims 5, 6 and 10 are not rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over Wang in view of Lynn and in further view of Chupin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,918,778), hereinafter "Chupin". For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed. The asserted combination of Wang in view of Lynn, and in further view of Chupin, independently or in combination, does not teach or suggest all features of the claimed invention.

Claim 7 depends indirectly on claim 1. Therefore, as Wang and Lynn fails to disclose a scratching means for removing particles required in claim 1, this deficiency of Wang and Lynn is not taught or suggested in the disclosure of Chupin. Thus, even if Wang were combined with

Lynn and Chupin, every limitation of claim 1 would not be taught, suggested, or otherwise rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination. As a result, Wang, Lynn and Chupin fail to render claim 7 obvious.

Claims 11-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Wang in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,735,806 to Blum et al. (hereinafter "Blum"). For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed. The asserted combination of Wang in view of Lynn, independently or in combination, does not teach or suggest all features of the claimed invention.

Claims 11-13 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1. As explained above with regard to claim 1, Wang fails to disclose a scratching means for removing particles within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph. Additionally, this deficiency of Wang is not taught or suggested in the disclosure of Blum. There is no disclosure in Blum of any structure for removing liquid or particles from a belt. In fact, the tacky sheet (e.g. item 115 in FIG. 1) is not cleanable, and must be removed when it becomes too soiled. Therefore, even if Wang were combined with Blum, every limitation of claim 1 would not be taught, suggested, or otherwise rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination.

Regarding claim 14, both Wang and Blum fail to disclose or suggest a scratching instrument having a leg abutting a conveyor belt that removes liquids and dirt particles from the belt. Therefore, even if Wang were combined with Blum, every limitation of claim 14 would not be taught, suggested, or otherwise rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination. Accordingly, claim 14 and its dependent claims 15-20 are patentable over the prior art of record.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the

application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned agent to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. ABE-37256.

Respectfully submitted,

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